



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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Mrs. Creighton gave an address on "The Value of Hardness in Education." On March 5th, Mr. T. G. Rooper, H.M. Inspector of Schools, will address parents on "Badly Brought-up Children." During March Miss Simpson will give a weekly lecture to parents on "How to Teach Natural History."

SOUTHPORT BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.*: Mrs. James Dixon, 8, Preston Road. A meeting was held at Lady Wheelers', on January 16th, when Miss Beatrice Taylor gave an interesting address on "A New Method of Teaching English History;" describing the Norman Conquest, and illustrating her lecture by lantern slides of the Bayeux Tapestry. The attendance was good, and new members were enrolled.

CARDIFF BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.*: Mrs. Greener, 1, Clare Street, Riverside.

SCARBOROUGH BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.*—Mrs. G. Rowntree, 14, Valley Bridge. On January 15th, the second drawing-room meeting was held, by the kind invitation of Mrs. J. E. Ellis. Unfortunately Mrs. Ellis was prevented from attending through illness, but in her absence the Secretary read a paper on "Home Life," by Mrs. Hart Davis. Mrs. Bryant, District Secretary, spoke upon the advantages of cultivating reading aloud in the family circle. She gave some interesting details of her own life. She also thought that to cultivate good story telling in children was a special benefit to them, making them dwell upon special points of picture painting, such as descriptions of scenery, place, attitude, &c. Training in usefulness was also pressed as an educational advantage in boys as well as in girls. After discussion, an extract was read, written by a member of the P.N.E.U. in Sheffield, on the presenting of the first religious impressions to little children, and how to deal wisely with them. The time was too short to allow this subject to be discussed in detail, but it was felt that many would like to devote a special meeting to it, being so fruitful for discussion, and a subject that many would like to get help in.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH.—*Hon. Secs.*: Mrs. Newton Coombe, Brocco Band, Sheffield, and Miss Walmsley, the High School.

BROUGHTY FERRY BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.*: Mrs. Don, The Lodge, Broughty Ferry, N.B. A demonstration lecture in "Brush Drawing" was given by Mr. Henry Beveridge on January 21st, which was well attended by members and friends, and was very much enjoyed. A "Nature Observing Club" has been started, for which several members have been enrolled.

DUNFERMLINE BRANCH.—*Hon. Sec.*: (pro tem.): Henry Beveridge, Esq., Pitreavie, Dunfermline, N.B.

EDINBURGH.—*Hon. Sec.*: Mrs. Berry Hart, 29, Charlotte Square.

ABERDEEN.—*Hon. Sec.* (pro tem.): Mrs. Lawson, 43, Hamilton Place.

Hon. Local Secs. are requested to send to the undersigned, without delay, reports of all matters of interest connected with their branches, written on one side of the paper only, also 30 copies of any prospectuses or other papers they may print.

HENRY PERRIN, HON. ORG. SEC.

THE PARENTS' REVIEW

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE
OF HOME-TRAINING AND CULTURE.

"Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

SOME OF THE HIGHER VIEWS OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY, VIEWED CHIEFLY FROM THE PHYSICAL ASPECT.

BY E. DOWNES, M.D.

PART I.

I HAVE been asked to read a paper at one of the meetings of your Society,* and the above subject was given me.

On looking at it I was rather staggered, I must confess, by its vastness, but I obtained a certain amount of relief on noticing two little words, viz, "some" and "chiefly."

I am not asked to deal exhaustively with the subject, but have only to try to add a little to the stock of knowledge which you as a Society are doubtless accumulating.

From a conversation which I had with your Secretary, I determined to take up the subject of Heredity: and after investigating this a little, I will endeavour to put before our meeting some of the chief duties of Parents towards their children, to meet the difficulties and dangers arising from Hereditary tendencies. I am especially encouraged to do so on reading the first paragraph of a leaflet published by the Union, which is as follows:—

"The Parents' Educational Union has arisen in response to a demand from thoughtful people for wisdom and know-

* The Parents' National Educational Union.

ledge in 'learning how,'—how to know the laws which govern the formation of habit, how to deal with hereditary tendencies, how to give intelligent supervision and guidance, how to develop and nourish the child's threefold nature."

While alluding to the printed papers of the Union, allow me to congratulate you on the excellent *methods* you adopt and the excellent *objects* which you have in view. I was especially delighted to read the first paragraph in the *central principles* of the Union, to which all local branches joining the Society are expected to pledge themselves, viz, "that a religious basis of work be maintained."

On first reading the subject suggested to me, I might have imagined I was invited to address a Secularist's Union; for the closing words are, "viewed chiefly from the Physical aspect," and I might as well say at once, that in dealing with questions of Heredity, I for one would feel in despair if I was limited to physical remedies. The difficulties are so great that one can afford to neglect no one class of assistance, whether physical, intellectual or religious; and certainly the last, viz, the assistance afforded by religion, could be spared least of all.

I shall, however, endeavour to stick to my text as far as I can, but I will reserve to myself the privilege of alluding to this last and most important class of remedy before closing my paper.

I see, in this same printed paper of principles and rules of the union, a list of papers that were read in 1890-1: and I am glad to see that two papers in that list deal exclusively with this most important subject of Heredity. I would recommend any of those interested in the subject to ask the Secretary to obtain these papers for perusal.

I now will proceed to attack our subject;—viz, "Some of the higher views of parental responsibility, viewed chiefly from the physical aspect"—which may be read, if you please, in the following way, on the present occasion:—"Hereditary tendencies—their reality and importance: and the best way in which they can be met by those who are responsible for children."

I shall not go beyond this portion of our subject this afternoon. One word of explanation is necessary before I begin. The cases, which I shall give, will be mostly extreme

cases; and some of my hearers will be apt to say, that these remarks are perhaps applicable to the criminal classes, but do not apply to respectable people like ourselves.

There is some truth in this: at the same time general laws are better understood by observing extreme cases: depend upon it, the same laws apply to the highest families in the land, as well as the lowest: circumstances, of course, will greatly modify the exact results.

Again, some may be inclined to say, no members of our family shew such bad tendencies, or anything approaching them. I would here give a word of caution; we are told on highest authority, that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Experience too often shews the truth of this saying. Do not be too sure that the tendency to any kind of vice or wickedness is not present in your particular family. If circumstances have been favourable to you, and have kept you free from any such thing, be thankful certainly; but do not too readily conclude that your children may not be in danger from the temptations from which you yourselves have never suffered.

A scientific term may here be of some help. Let me explain what is meant by *Atavism*. The word is derived from *Atavus*—a grandfather: and it signifies the inheritance of a disease, or constitutional peculiarity, from a generation antecedent to that immediately preceding.

Remember, therefore, that hereditary tendencies may skip over a generation or more, and then reappear. You may be the fortunate generation, but the tendency may be latent, ready possibly to shew itself in certain of your children. The fact is, that none of us can afford to disregard hereditary tendencies. If we know of the existence of certain tendencies, we must carefully guard against them in our children: if we do not know of their existence, we must still be on our guard, lest they should be lurking, hidden beneath the surface.

HEREDITARY TENDENCIES.

By this we mean any tendency handed on by parents to their offspring. Such tendencies are various. They may be good or bad. All civilization, all the arts and sciences, religion itself are included among the good tendencies. So is a noble physique, a sound constitution, and all the other

blessings of bodily health. So too are certain intellectual and moral qualities. In some families, for example, there is present a marked love for truth and honour, and deep horror for falsehood and everything underhand and dishonourable. For such a goodly inheritance we cannot be too deeply and, I would add, humbly thankful.

We need not enlarge at present on this part of our subject: we are anxious, just now especially, to consider hereditary tendencies of an evil kind. These, again, may be divided into two subdivisions, viz, physical and moral.

Of the physical tendencies I need not say very much. I will say a little more when I deal with the best ways in which these tendencies can be counteracted. We all know perfectly well, that some families are weakly; some have very definite forms of weakness, such as Phthisis (or consumption), Cancer, Gout, Rheumatism, and a peculiar weakness, sometimes called scrofula, shewing itself in a tendency to enlarged glands, chiefly of the neck, insanity, and other nervous diseases. I say that we are all agreed that such things are hereditary, so I need not take up time in demonstrating this part of our subject.

When, however, we come to bad moral tendencies, we are apt to forget that the same law holds good; it is sometimes convenient to forget it. Here, at any rate, we find it necessary to give some proof for our assertion, that *moral tendencies to evil are often hereditary*.

So we come to this heading of our subject.

HEREDITARY TENDENCIES TO EVIL OF A MORAL KIND— THEIR REALITY AND IMPORTANCE.

In order to bring some proof before you, I have looked over the British Medical Journals of the past twelve years. I think that I could not produce a more reliable authority.

I will first refer you to the second volume of that journal for the year 1882, page 433, here is a paragraph headed—

“CRIMINAL HEREDITY.”

“Most readers are acquainted with the history of ‘Margaret the Mother of Criminals,’ as she has been called, who was born in a village on the Hudson River, in the northern part of the State of New York, about one hundred years ago.

Dr. Elisha Harris, of the City of New York, is authority for the following statement, which is the result of his personal inquiries—Margaret was a pauper child, left adrift on one of the villages on the Upper Hudson, about ninety years ago. There was no almshouse in the place, and she was made a subject of outdoor relief, receiving occasionally food and clothing from the town officials, but was never educated nor sheltered in a proper home. She became the mother of a long race of criminals and paupers, which has cursed the country ever since. The county records shew that two hundred of her descendants have been criminals. In one generation of her unhappy line there were twenty children, of whom seventeen lived to maturity. Nine served terms aggregating fifty years in the State Prison for high crimes, and all the others were frequent inmates of gaols and almshouses. It is said that of the 623 descendants of this outcast girl, 200 committed crimes which brought them upon the Court records, and most of the others were idiots, drunkards, lunatics, paupers, or prostitutes. The cost to the country of this race of criminals and paupers is estimated as at least 100,000 dollars, taking no account of the damage they inflicted upon property, and the suffering and degradation they caused in others.”

Now turn to Vol. II. of 1887, page 1122. Paragraph headed—

“INEBRIETY AND HEREDITY.”

“The intimate relation between inebriety and heredity has been recently the subject of an interesting paper by Dr. T. D. Crothers, of Hartford, Connecticut, U.S.A. Alcoholic heredity is considered as direct and indirect. The direct heredities are exhibited in inebriates whose parents and grandparents have drunk to excess. One curious feature of Dr. Crothers’ wide experience has been, that the female issue has not manifested this direct transmission so often as the male issue. This inheritance is seen sometimes in very young children.

The indirect alcoholic transmission is witnessed in the intemperate ancestors, handing down diseased nerve deficiencies; which may run through a generation or two, then suddenly develope into inebriety. The subjects of indirect

alcoholic heredity often die early, leaving a large progeny; who find, in alcohol or opiums, a seductive relief from all their troubles. In one family an American settler was an inebriate, and left a quiver full. The first generation was noted for the number of cases of consumption and heart disease; the second for consumption, eccentricity, heart disease, rheumatism and insanity: in the third generation, inebriety and hard drinking prevailed."

Now turn to Vol. II. for 1889, page 1198.

"A CASE OF HEREDITARY HOMICIDAL TENDENCY."

"At Southwark police court, on November 18th, Charles Pillford, a ship's labourer, was charged on remand with attempting to murder a police sergeant.

It appears the prisoner was ejected from a public house on November 9th, and returned immediately, and flung two pewter pots at the landlord, who ordered him out a second time. He returned again with a large knife in his hand, and made towards the landlord, who retired behind the bar. The next thing the landlord saw was the prisoner making stabs at the police sergeant with the large knife.

The landlord also stated that the prisoner was not drunk; and he had little doubt that, but for the intervention of the police sergeant, the accused would have murdered him.

The prisoner's mother, who was called as a witness, gave the following extraordinary family history: there was, she said, a mania in the family on the husband's side. Ten years ago her husband's brother was charged at that court with attempting to murder his wife. Nine years ago her husband was there for attempting to kill her. There were seven brothers on her husband's side, and all of them had done something. One brother bought a pistol, two days before he died, to blow his wife's brains out with.

Since her husband was there, she had had to get rid of three razors. She had been married twenty-seven years, and during that time hardly a year passed without something like this happening. Two of her husband's brothers committed suicide, and it was all through drink. In answer to the charge the prisoner said he knew nothing about the knife."

I know what will be said, these ghastly anecdotes are gleanings from the police courts and lunatic asylums; they

are hardly applicable to persons living ordinary and respectable lives.

No doubt this is the fact: but these stories shew that crime is hereditary; and the police courts and lunatic asylums will provide you with any number more of a similar kind; I wish to prove, as clearly as I possibly can, exactly this—that crime is hereditary. Crime is only a coarse uncontrolled form of wickedness; and once establish this law, viz., that crime is hereditary; you will no longer doubt for a moment, but that all vice and wickedness is hereditary also. I may add that it is a law, which you will hardly find any doctor of experience to doubt.

Leaving the police courts and lunatic asylums for a time, I will make a quotation or two, which will bear upon ordinary, respectable life. I will quote from an article of the Journal, Vol. II., for 1885, page 606, headed—

THE WARNINGS OF HEREDITY.

"It is hardly any longer necessary to take pains to prove the existence of a general law of Heredity. Medical readers, at least, do not require to be convinced that children, as a general rule, the exceptions to which are readily explicable, resemble their parents in physical characters, intellectual aptitudes, and moral propensities. The broad law of *similia ex similibus* is written upon the face of biology in plain and obvious characters, which no fine observation or nice discrimination is required to recognise. It is important, however, to be thoroughly convinced that heredity is not a mere vagrant principle, operating here and inoperative there, in an apparently uncertain and haphazard fashion, but a fixed law, always in action, but liable to be frequently obscured, owing to the extreme complexity of its conditions."

I must make one more short quotation before finishing this part of our subject. See in the same volume, page 653. I will give an extract from a review on a German book, by Von Dr. Emanuel Roth, Berlin, called "A Historic Critical Review of Facts concerning Heredity.

"We have to thank the way we neglect the training of the body," observes Dr. Roth, "that 64 per cent. of those that should work, are good for nothing, and that a larger percentage of the young men coming out of the higher schools are

below the normal conditions of health. Dr. Roth thinks that the present system of education, and the conditions of modern life, have a dwarfing effect upon the imagination, which lowers our ideals and encourages selfishness."

Dr. Roth may be a pessimist, but he hits the right nail on the head when he points out, that modern civilised life tends to a selfishness which becomes more pronounced as it passes from generation to generation. Of how many vicious evils this selfishness is the parent, no one can form an estimate. It is easy, however, to see how a selfish parent may have a heartless son; and in the next two generations we may expect to find an unprincipled grandson, and a vicious great grandson.

Here we must close this part of our subject. I claim to have proved, that evil hereditary tendencies of a moral kind are real and important.

(To be continued.)

ABSTRACT OF AN ARTICLE ON CHILDREN'S LIES.

BY MISS WALKER

(Principal of St. George's High School and Training College, Edinburgh).

This article, by PROFESSOR G. STANLEY HALL, appeared in the "American Journal of Psychology," January, 1890, and has subsequently been reprinted in separate form.*

[THE origin of Professor Stanley Hall's article, was the desire of some American women-teachers to reach a better understanding of the causes and preventives of the tendency, which all careful observers of children cannot fail to be acquainted with, *i.e.*, the tendency to deviate with greater or less degree of moral culpability from the narrow path of truth. Children who "never told a lie" are probably very rare, and the majority of those who, like the youthful George Washington, "cannot tell a lie," exist probably only in the imagination of fond mothers who have no knowledge of the psychology of the growing mind.

The materials for the Article were gathered in interviews with nearly three hundred school children—boys and girls—whose ages for the most part ranged from twelve to fourteen. These children were selected by the teachers as fairly representative for the purpose they had in view, and we are told that they were interviewed privately and in an indirect way designed not to wound the delicacy of the childish conscience. One feels that the results obtained might have been more scientifically valuable, had each of the three hundred cases been enquired into by the same enquirer, or enquirers, and not by different independent teachers; one feels also that statistics about lies, gathered from the children who tell them, may be even more fallacious than statistics in general;

* An article with the same title, shorter, but otherwise almost literally identical, appeared in the "Pedagogical Seminary," in June, 1891.